Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace a paragraph at page 29 line 23 to page 30 line 11, with the following amended paragraph:

However, in the simple, two-node, bridged scenario illustrated in Figs. 6A and 6B, the entities that detect the fault 622, i.e., the nodes immediately upstream and downstream of the fault, also correspond to the "Protection Switching Entities" ("PSEs") of the system 600, i.e., the protected traffic VF [[612]] 610 originates in the Ingress node 602, and terminates in the Egress Node 604, and there are no other nodes upstream, downstream, or intermediate of these two nodes. Accordingly, each of the PSEs is immediately aware of the failure, as described below, and the upstream/downstream transmission of a PSS over the MCF 618 of the PPG 606 therefore becomes unnecessary and redundant in this simple network. However, as discussed in some of the examples below, the affected PSEs do not always correspond to the "fault detecting entities," and as a result, are not always aware of the occurrence of a fault, and consequently require a PSS to effect the appropriate protection switching to restore the traffic in the network.

Please replace a paragraph at page 42 line 6 to page 42 line 16, with the following amended paragraph:

The response of the network 1200 to a failure 1220 in the active VF is illustrated in Fig. 12B. Upon the occurrence of the failure 1220 in the active, protected VF 1208 between the Ingress node 1202 and the intermediate node 1204, each of the foregoing nodes detects the failure, generates a PSS, and transmits it on the MCF 1216 of the active PPG 1212 in the upstream and downstream directions, respectively. Upon its reception of the PPS from the intermediate node [[1206]] 1204, the Egress node 1206 switches its reception of the protected traffic from the active, or working, PPG 1212 to the protect traffic VF 1210 carried on the protect link ⑥, and received by the protect RAP 1206B1 therein, to restore the flow of the traffic 1201 in the system. Thus, as in the other bridged embodiments above, the only PSE in this protection scenario is the Egress node 1206.